The Pastimes of Nimai Pandit

Act Two - Nmai Pandit As A Youth

The Initiation of Lord Caitany in Gaya - The Servant of the Servant

from "Sri Gaura Lila"
The Pastimes and Precepts of the Golden Avatar
by His Holiness Varsana Swami
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Narrator: At the height of His career as Nimai Pandit, Sri Caitanya traveled to the holy city of Gaya to perform the funeral rites for His departed father. The King of Knowledge Himself, accompanied by his numerous followers, sanctified all the holy places. The beautiful Lord joked and laughed with His students, engaging freely in the pleasure of talking on a variety of topics. But when the Lord came to Gaya, His mood changed completely. For sixteen years, Sri Gaura Sundara has hid Himself from His devotees, increasing their hankering and love for Him. But, because of that increase, the Lord could not remain hidden long. In Gaya, Nimai revealed His actual devotional mood, answering His devotees' prayers that He too become a devotee of Lord Krsna.

Joining His beautiful hands, the golden Youth paid obeisances to the Holy City. He became forgetful of His students, their joking and conversation and was overcome with spiritual fervor. After visiting two of the shrines, Nimai visited the Vishnu temple of Sri Gadadhara. An actual imprint of Lord Krsna's lotus footstep is enshrined there. Brahmanasa were seated all around the holy site and garlands offered to those Feet were piled as high as a temple. The offerings of incense, oils, flowers, ghee, jewels, and other articles were incalculable. The brahmanas, who were as beautiful as celestials, were engaged in reciting the glories of Sri Gadadhara's Lotus Feet from all sides as follows:
(As Nimai Pandit gazes with great ecstasy)

Brahmana: O most fortunate people, behold these Feet that are embraced by the Lord of Kasi, that are the life of Laksmi, that manifest themselves on the head of Bali! Behold those Feet Whose momentary meditation frees one the influence of Yamaraj, the God of Death! Behold, all you fortunate people, the same Lotus Feet are so rarely attained by the highest yogis, those Feet in Whom the sanctifying Bhagirathi makes her appearance. Fortuante people, behold those dearly beloved Feet that rest on the soft couch of Sri Ananta.

Narrator: At that time, Sri Isvara Puri appeared. He seemed to come by accident, but actually it was the awakened desire for pure love of Krsna in Nimai' s heart that brought Him there, for Sri Isvara Puri is Sri Caitanya's beloved Spiritual Master. Sri Isvara Puri, seeing the ecstatic mood of Nimai

Pandit, embraced Him.

Nimai: My pilgrimage to Gaya has born fruit only now, inasmuch as I have attained the sight of your feet. By performing the funeral ceremony at Gaya, only the ancestor to whom it is offered is relieved from his suffering. But the sight of you instantly frees unlimited numbers of departed souls from their sufferings. Therefore, the Holy Place itself is not equal to you. You are the highest of all pilgrimage sites and the best of all places of pilgrimage. Saints of your caliber are themselves places of pilgrimage. Kindly deliver Me from the ocean of this worldly existence. I surrender to you; may you be pleased to make Me drink the nectar of the Lotus Feet of Lord Krsna. This is the gift I pray for.

Isvara Puri: Listen, Pandita, I know that You are the Supreme Isvara Himself. I have had an auspicious dream on this very day. Now I have obtained the fruit of the dream in this tangible form. I tell You the truth, Pandit - at the sight of You I experience unending, transcendental bliss. Ever since I first saw You at Navadvipa, nothing else has had any attraction for my heart. By seeing You, I experience the same bliss as by seeing Lord Krsna.

Nimai: (laughing) I am, indeed, most fortunate.

Scene Two

Narrator: Having greeted Sri Isvara Puri in this manner, Nimai Pandit asked his permission to perform the funeral rights that are written in the scriptures. All the worldly sufferings of those brahmanas who took the remnants of Nimai Pandit's offerings on their heads were cancelled. Afterwards, the Lord took excellent garlands and sandalwood paste and, with His own beautiful hands worshipped the Footprint of Sri Vishnu with great joy. The Lord then returned to His lodgings and satisfied the brahmanas with gifts. After taking rest, Nimai began to cook His meal.

Just as He had finished cooking, Sri Isvara Puri arrived as a guest. In the act of chanting the Names of Sri Krsna in pure devotion, Sri Isvara Puri came to the place where the lord was preparing His meal. Nimai Pandit offered him a seat with great reverence.

Isvara Puri: (laughing) So, Pandit, I see that I have come at the perfect time.

Nimai: Since good fortune has manifested itself, may your Reverence accept the charity of this cooked food today.

Isvara Puri: And what will You have for lunch?

Nimai: I will cook again.

Isvara Puri: What is the use of cooking again? Divide the cooked food into two halves.

Nimai: If, indeed, you want to help Me at all, then please accept all the food that I have cooked.

Narrator: So relishable is the fruit of love of God, that God Himself exchanges roles with His devotee in order to taste it. The Supreme Isvara becomes the menial servant of His loving devotee, Isvara Puri, because of his submissive and menial service to his Spiritual Master, Madhavendra Puri, became blessed with pure, ecstatic love of Sri Sri Radha and Krsna.

Because of Isvara Puri's pure service mentality, Madhavendra Puri empowered Isvara Puri to convey that love to those whom he initiated. Of course, he only apparently initiates Sri Caitanya, Who is the source of all ecstatic mellows of love of God.

How then could Isvara Puri have developed such love before the Advent of Sri Krsna Caitanya? Madhavendra Puri was a sannyasi in the spiritual community known as the Madhva sampradaya. Vaishnavas recognize four original sampradayas or spiritual communities, which contain the various methods and philosophy of pure worship of Sri Krsna. The mood in which Sri Krsna Caitanya displayed the highest worship and love for SK is the mood of Srimati Radharani - loving devotional service in separation from the Lord. The present day Gaudiya-Madhva sampradaya, coming in direct line from Sri Caitanya, considers worship in separation to be the topmost level of devotional service.

However, the Madhva sampradaya had no worship or realization of devotional service in this mood of separation and conjugal love until Sri Madhavendra Puri revealed it through his worship of Lord Krsna. He received the authority of his worship from Srila
Nityananda Prabhu, the eternal associate of Lord Caitanya. Although Sri Madhavendra Puri seems to have introduced something new into his sampradaya, he actually simply uncovered one part of K's overall plan to unite the four sampradayas throughout His Pastimes as Sri Caitanya.

Sri Madhavendra Puri placed the germinating seed of ecstatic love within the Madhva sampradaya, which had been mainly concerned with following rules and regulations and prescribed forms of worship, while developing strong philosophy to defeat the Mayavadis. This seed fructified in the pure worship of Sri Isvara Puri and became the great tree of ecstatic love of Lord Krsna embodied in Sri Caitanya.
(Perform initiation ceremony.)

Scene Three

Narrator: Shortly after His initiation, as Sri Caitanya was meditating on the Holy Names in private, the impulse of loving devotion, which had so long been gathering strength within His heart, suddenly burst through all restraints and became manifest in the world as pure love of God. The Lord could be heard crying with a loud voice. The words He recited appeared to be directly from the scriptures but actually, they were formerly spoken by Srimati Radharani during Her lila. Now the Lord was recalling Her words as He became overwhelmed with Her sentiments.

Nimai: O Krsna! O My Darling! Sri Hari, My Life, My Soul! Where have You gone after stealing My heart!? Indeed, I had obtained My Lord but now where has He gone?

Narrator: Before returning to Navadvip, Sri Caitanya visited the birthplace of His Spiritual Master. Arriving at the site, the Lord greeted it with His fervent attention, saying, "I make My obeisances to Sri Kumara Hatta, the blessed village in which Sri Isvara Puri made his appearance in the world!" Lord Caitanya wept for a long time and could not articulate any other sound except, "Isvara Puri!"

The Lord took some earth from that spot and, tying it into His own outer cloth, took it with Him. "This is the birthplace of Sri Isvara Puri," Sri Gaura Chandra declared. "This earth is My heart's love, My treasure, My life." With such intensity does the Lord love the surrendered servant of His servant, Isvara Puri.

Though Sri Caitanya carefully followed the Vedic injunctions for visiting a holy place by offering the due sacrifice and by bathing in the sacred Ganges, He revealed the true place of pilgrimage in His praise of Sri Isvara Puri. Sri Krsna Caitanya is the complete embodiment of the Srimad Bhagavatam, the literary ripened fruit of all the Vedic scriptures. It is stated therien that those saints who have taken complete shelter at the Lotus Feet of Sri Krsna can at once purify those who come in touch with them; whereas the waters of Sri Ganga-devi purify only after prolonged use. The association of a pure devotee has immediate effect and thus is more purifying than the sacred rivers.
(Bhajan)